

# Responsibility to struggle – responsibility for peace: Course of recognition and a recurrent pattern in Ricœur's political thought

*Philosophy and Social Criticism*

2015, Vol. 41(8) 771–790

© The Author(s) 2015

Reprints and permission:

sagepub.co.uk/journalsPermissions.nav

DOI: 10.1177/0191453714563875

psc.sagepub.com



**Ernst Wolff**

*Department of Philosophy, University of Pretoria, South Africa and CEMS, Ecole des hautes études en sciences sociales, CNRS*

## Abstract

The aim of this article is to present a perspective on Ricœur's ethico-political thought in *Course of Recognition* and, by extension, on that of his entire work. The point of departure is the hypothesis that Ricœur's (singular) reading of Weber on political responsibility provides one with an invaluable vantage point from where to identify a recurrent pattern in the French philosopher's ethico-political thought. After a brief presentation and illustration of this hypothesis a close reading, principally of study III of *Course of Recognition*, is offered. This reading affirms the hypothesis. It also allows a number of conclusions regarding the continuities, or a trait of 'narrative identity' in Ricœur's ethico-political thought. This in turn enables one to better identify the stakes and objectives of Ricœur's argument in the selected text and to qualify the relation this may be considered to have to his religious convictions.

## Keywords

Politics, recognition, responsibility, Paul Ricœur, Max Weber

## I Introduction: is *Course of Recognition* Ricœur's last appropriation of Weber on political responsibility?

This question, chosen as the heading to introduce this article on the responsibility to struggle and the responsibility for peace, may be straightforward, yet, for those who know Ricœur's later work, it may appear an odd question to spend time on. In his *Course*

---

## Corresponding author:

Ernst Wolff, University of Pretoria, Private Bag X20, Hatfield, Pretoria 0028, South Africa.

Email: ernst.wolff@up.ac.za

of *Recognition*, Weber is barely named (only three times) and this with reference to other aspects of the sociologist's writings than his notion of responsibility. Also, the notion of *responsibility* – a key one of Ricœur's work of the 1990s – is used in a fairly marginal manner in this book. As for the *political* philosophical implications of his reflections on recognition, these remain underdeveloped; Ricœur qualifies his limited ambition in this book as 'not desiring to get involved in a political philosophical discussion about the structure of the state'.<sup>1</sup> My question may seem even nonsensical if one considers the place that Weber takes in Ricœur's work in general. An exhaustive overview is not needed to support this point. Consider merely the following dimensions of Ricœur's relation to Weber:

1. Ricœur's political interlocutors are Arendt, Habermas, Marx, Walzer, Boltanski and Thévenot, Hegel, Plato, Aristotle, Taylor, Honneth, etc. – but not Weber.
2. When Ricœur reads Weber (in his published work), his focus is first of all on the introduction to *Economy and Society*.<sup>2</sup>
3. There is a short discussion of Weber in *Time and Narrative*, but here again, Weber's relevance for the epistemology of historiography is examined.<sup>3</sup>
4. When Weber's great essay on political responsibility, 'Politics as a Vocation',<sup>4</sup> is referred to, it is practically always only to evoke Weber's definition of the state as the instance that holds a monopoly on the legitimate use of violence in a specific territory.<sup>5</sup> Here and there, one finds allusions<sup>6</sup> – but nothing more – to the distinction between *Verantwortungsethik* and *Gesinnungsethik* (which I shall render here as 'ethics of responsibility' and 'ethics of principle' – unsatisfactory as always).
5. Otherwise, the text of 'Politics as a Vocation' is absent from Ricœur's writings (if I see it correctly), except for a short essay of 1959, to which I shall come back in a moment.

Against this backdrop, I nevertheless still affirm the importance of examining whether *Course of Recognition* is Ricœur's *last* appropriation of Weber's notion of political responsibility. By anticipating my answer, the thrust of this study could be clarified: no, clearly, in the most obvious sense, this book does not contain an explicit appropriation of Weber's notion, however, a major trait of Ricœur's political thought, of which one finds a symptomatic expression in his first and only reading of Weber on responsibility, is still reflected in *Course of Recognition*.

By demonstrating that this is the case, I hope to achieve a number of goals. *First*, in *Course of Recognition*, and in particular its third study, which will be in the centre of our concern, Ricœur's discussion and appropriation of other authors' work take such an important place that one may be excused for getting the impression that he is more concerned with construing a debate between *other* authors, than participating in that debate himself. By demonstrating how Ricœur is working on a long-standing concern in *Course of Recognition*, I hope to amplify his voice in the debate with Honneth, Boltanski, Hénaff and the others. This will help to clarify the objective and the stakes of this book. *Second*, recent years of Ricœur scholarship have been characterized by an explosion of interest in and attempts to further develop his social and political thought.<sup>7</sup> One of the emergent

debates regards the continuity or discontinuity of Ricœur's political thought.<sup>8</sup> This question having become too complex to be tackled in a single article, my ambition is merely to contribute an important element to this debate: I shall argue for a family resemblance or a narrative identity of Ricœur's political thought, perhaps over the longest stretch of his life as author. *Third*, the terms by which Ricœur presents his contribution to the political question of mutual recognition – 'agapé', 'states of peace' and, perhaps, 'gratitude' – may raise the question regarding the role of religious convictions in Ricœur's work.<sup>9</sup> My reading of Ricœur's undertaking in *Course of Recognition* will allow for a partial characterization of Ricœur's position in this issue in his last book. (The conclusions will be drawn in section V.)

In order to work towards these goals, I shall start then from what seems to me a particularly helpful vantage point: Ricœur's reading of Weber on political responsibility. In a previous study,<sup>10</sup> I have made the case for the significance of Weber's responsibility for Ricœur. I shall have to summarize those findings briefly in order to launch the current argument.<sup>11</sup>

## II Weber: 'Here I stand; I can do no other'

In order to appreciate what Ricœur did with Weber in his 1959 reading of 'Politics as a Vocation', let me recall (my reading of!) Weber's basic answer to the question of what the vocation to live for politics consists. The person who wants to put his hand on the wheel of history<sup>12</sup> would have to have three qualities: a matter-of-fact kind of passion for the cause [*Leidenschaft*], a cool sense of proportion [*Augenmaß*] and a 'feeling of responsibility' [*Verantwortungsgefühl*].<sup>13</sup> This responsibility does not refer to the duty of officials, but an ethic that is to be understood in its contrast to another form of ethics which has no common denominator with responsibility:<sup>14</sup>

... all ethically orientated conduct may be guided by one of two *fundamentally differing and irreconcilably opposed* maxims [*voneinander grundverschiedenen, unaustragbar gegensätzlichen Maximen*]: conduct can be orientated to an 'ethic of principles' or to an 'ethic of responsibility' ... However, there is an *abysmal contrast* between conduct that follows the maxim of an ethic of principle – that is in religious terms, 'The Christian does rightly and leaves the results with the Lord' – and conduct that follows the maxim of an ethic of responsibility, in which case one has to give an account of the (foreseeable) *consequences* of one's action.<sup>15</sup>

Those who act from an ethic of principle, consider themselves called only for the continuation of deeds of good intention. However, they fail on the question of ends justifying the means – a tragedy exposed already in the old religions in the question of theodicy: bad things also come to those who do right things. On the other hand, those who practise an ethic of responsibility are aware of this tragedy inevitably associated with action:

No ethics in the world can dodge the fact that in numerous instances the attainment of 'good' ends is bound to the fact that one must be willing to pay the price of using morally dubious means or at least dangerous ones – and facing the possibility or even the

probability of evil ramifications. From no ethics in the world can it be concluded when and to what extent the ethically good purpose 'justifies' the ethically dangerous means and ramifications.<sup>16</sup>

That is why the responsible politician has to give an account of the consequences of his or her action. If politics is the attempt to influence the power of the state, and the state is ultimately defined by its recourse to the use of violent means,<sup>17</sup> then those who have the calling to live *for* politics have to act out of their responsibility 'for what may become of [themselves] under the impact of these paradoxes',<sup>18</sup> since they let themselves in 'for the diabolic forces lurking in all violence'.<sup>19</sup>

Acting under these tragic circumstances and exacerbated by the disenchantment of the world, which deprives politicians, as everybody else, of an unequivocal ultimate reference of the justification of their decisions, the truly devoted politician (or ethical agents in general – as the following citation seems to suggest) inspires Weber's admiration:

... it is immensely moving when a *mature* man [*sic*] – no matter whether old or young in years – is aware of a responsibility for the consequences of his conduct and really feels such responsibility with heart and soul. He then acts by following an ethic of responsibility and somewhere he reaches the point where he says: '*Here I stand; I can do no other.*' That is something genuinely human and moving. And *every one of us* who is not spiritually dead must realise the possibility of finding himself at some time in that position. In so far as this is true, an ethic of principle and an ethic of responsibility are *not absolute contrasts but rather supplements* [*nicht absolute Gegensätze, sondern Ergänzungen*], which only in *unison* constitute a genuine man – a man who *can* have the 'calling for politics'.<sup>20</sup>

Understandably, this passionate climax of Weber's speech has created headaches for interpreters. How can two forms of ethics that are derived from 'two fundamentally differing and irreconcilably opposed maxims' and between which there is no common denominator, become supplements?

It seems that one ultimately has two possibilities: either to accept that Weber is contradicting himself beyond remedy or – as I have argued is to be done<sup>21</sup> – to take seriously Weber's insistence at the beginning of this passage that he is moved by action *out of responsibility*. This latter reading seems to find some support if one takes into consideration that earlier in this text, Weber denounced the extreme form of ethic of principle, which is chiliastic violence, i.e. that act of violence by which the principled agent wishes to make an end to all violence.<sup>22</sup> In other words, through this example Weber had already rejected the possibility of supplementing an ethics of principle by an ethic of responsibility (the latter taken in the sense of willingness to give account of consequences of action). In the light of this fact, it seems better to consider the two forms of ethics *not* as *mutual* supplements, but *only* ethics of principle as a supplement of responsibility, and this in a very specific sense, namely as the form of extreme responsibility or *responsibility elevated to a principle*.

Weber praises the willingness to assume the consequences for the use of the power (of the state, in some people's case) against the backdrop of the rejection of cosmic-ethical realism. This is found where the agent assumes responsibility for foreseen (and

unforeseen?) outcomes of action, to the point of affirming 'Here I stand', and by so doing assuming the consequences of that action almost like the agents of an ethics of principle would do. In this way, the ethics of principle 'supplements' the ethics of responsibility in the sense that responsibility is elevated to a principle. What is moving for Weber, if I see it correctly, is when someone exclaims: "'I can do no other": no matter what the consequences (even to myself) [= principle], "here I stand": I shall take responsibility for the consequences [= responsibility], because I feel myself obliged to it [= vocation].'

The essence of Weber's perspective on political responsibility is thus encapsulated in the formula: 'Here I stand; I can do no other.'

### III Ricœur: 'Up to here, but no further!'

Early in 1959 the journal *Esprit* invited Paul Ricœur to introduce its readers to Max Weber's essay 'Politics as a Vocation', in which Weber's notion of responsibility is presented. The occasion for this event was the publication, that same year, of the first French translation of that essay and of 'Science as a Vocation'.<sup>23</sup> Ricœur's reading of Weber's text was published under the title 'Ethics and Politics', and is now available in the first volume of his *Lectures*.<sup>24</sup> This essay presents hardly anything more than a simple rendering of the basic content of Weber's 'Politics as a Vocation'. It is only on the last half-page that Ricœur unfolds his very peculiar reading of the climax of Weber's essay.<sup>25</sup> The key passage reads as follows:

... for souls that are not dead, there is always a moment that can neither be planned, nor stipulated, when the ethic of principle blocks the person that acts according to the rule of responsibility and suggests, as Socrates' demon that said always *no*: 'Up to here, but no further [*Jusqu'ici, mais pas plus loin*].' It is not said either that this contradiction is without solution; it is rather a test [*épreuve*] in all the meanings of the word – and this test makes a choice inevitable.<sup>26</sup>

From a list of curious improvisations that Ricœur introduces with respect to Weber, let me insist only on what is decisive, namely the altogether new vision of the relation between the two forms of ethics as it precipitates from this reading. Whereas Weber typified the ethic of principle as averse to deliberation about consequences, Ricœur assigns to this ethics a specific form of deliberation about consequences, namely about the limits within which one may responsibly accept specific consequences. This means that, instead of rejecting the ethic of principle and elevating responsibility to the level of a principle, the ethic of principle now receives a specific, autonomous task, namely of demarcating the field in which responsibility may operate. One reads this improvisation clearly in Ricœur's gloss according to which this role of limitation is like the Socratic 'no' – i.e. the positive role of the ethic of principle consists of a negative function in relation to responsibility. This coordination of responsibility and principled ethics is consolidated in Ricœur's rendering of the words that legend attributes to Luther: '*Hier stehe ich, ich kann nicht anders*',<sup>27</sup> and that is cited by Weber (albeit by changing the order of the two halves of the phrase). Gerth and Mills translate Weber into English: 'Here I stand; I can do no other.'<sup>28</sup> I judge that the meaning of the phrase – both for the context

of the legend of Luther and for the context of Weber's argument – should be paraphrased as saying, 'This is my position and it is impossible for me not to hold it', or 'This is what I think is to be done and I shall not budge from it'. What should surprise the reader is not only that Ricœur, celebrating Freund's new translation, does not use Freund's translation in the only citation from 'Politics as a Vocation' in his essay, but that (in agreement with the spirit of Freund's translation: '*Je ne puis faire autrement. Je m'arrête là!*' ([I can do no other. I stop here!]<sup>29</sup>)), he completely changes Weber's point. Ricœur's paraphrase reads: '*Jusqu'ici, mais pas plus loin*' ('Up to here, but not further'<sup>30</sup>). These words are still, like in Weber's text, placed in the mouth of a responsible politician/person, but now this responsible person has equally internalized the autonomous negative function of the ethic of principle and by which the scope of responsible action is limited. What stood, in Weber, for refusal to assume the consequences of action, stands in Ricœur for ethical deliberation that sets limits to responsible action. Now, being responsible does not mean maintaining a course of action deemed good or necessary, despite the unavoidable undesirable consequences (Weber), but comes to mean yielding to the intimidation by undesirable consequences and assuming responsibility only within the quarantined space demarcated and maintained by the 'no' of principled ethics. True enough, Ricœur still sees a contradiction between the two forms of ethics, and therefore points to the unavoidable choices by which to resolve this test in practice.

The claim that underlies the current article is that even if this may amount to a serious misreading or contortion of Weber's position, it is particularly revealing of the general structure of Ricœur's approach to political philosophy. I have supported this claim elsewhere by demonstrating that this particular manner of appropriating Weber is taken up in different places in Ricœur's work in more or less explicit formulations.<sup>31</sup> For current purposes, I shall assume the validity of this claim. Before I cite two examples to illustrate this point, let us first consolidate the findings of this reading by means of a schematic reformulation. By reading Ricœur, reading Weber, we learn that for the French philosopher, in considering political action

1. one has to theorize the normative motivation of this action,
2. in a manner that takes full cognizance of the constitution of the political domain itself,
3. that such a normative reflection on politics consists of two parts,
  - a. one of which could be labelled as the affirmation of the best that politics can achieve albeit at the price of calculated violence;
  - b. and the other could be labelled as the negative opposition to the harmful side effects of the first, but where the second can nonetheless never serve as replacement of the first.
4. The tension between these two dimensions of normative considerations in politics is structural, in the sense that it is *theoretically* irresolvable.
5. However, the tension can and should be resolved in practice by choices that through compromise, attempt to optimize the best of both irreconcilable normative stances. The true normativity of politics is situated in this practical balancing act that could be summarized in the formula: 'yes, up to here, no, not further'.

The same strategy for thinking normativity on the scale of political interaction could be found repeated in Ricœur's work. Let us take *Oneself as Another* as a significant example (the numbering that follows refers to the previous points). Here Ricœur's philosophical anthropology culminates in (1) a hermeneutics of the agent of responsibility, also called his 'little ethics'. The latter consists of arguing for (3) the almost contemporaneous validity and theoretically irresolvable tension between two forms of normative imputation of action to agents, at work (2) over the full scope of socio-political reality. On the one hand, (3a) ethics refers to the wish to live well, with and for others in just institutions; on the other hand, (3b) morality (Ricœur's reinterpretation of the deontological tradition) consists of opposing those ethical actions which cannot pass the test of universalizability. Morality is the 'no' against the 'yes' of ethics. But since the rigorous pursuit of the universal norm can have its own harmful consequences, one is guided back to ethics again in a to-and-fro between ethics and morality which (4) prudent practical decisions alone can arbitrate. And finally, as Ricœur claims explicitly, 'it is always alone that, in what we called the tragic character of action, we make up our minds. In measuring up to conviction in this way, conscience attests to the passive side: "Here I stand! I cannot do otherwise!" [*Ici je me tiens! Je ne puis autrement!*]',<sup>32</sup>

If Ricœur's singular reading of Weber on the ethics of responsibility and the ethics of principle can serve as a vantage point from where to explore his ethico-political thought of *Oneself as Another*, could it (despite the reservations formulated above in section I), help one to read the ethico-political part of *Course of Recognition*?

#### IV Mutual recognition: Struggle . . . but gratitude

Let us now turn to *Course of Recognition* – a book in which the repetition of this thought pattern may not be as evident as in the example cited above. It is in the third study that the political and normative dimension of the 'ordered polysemy' of the notion 'recognition' comes clearest to the fore.<sup>33</sup> After a reminder of the radical dissymmetry underlying all reciprocity (whether one follows Husserl or Levinas, is argued to be immaterial), Ricœur presents 'Hobbes' challenge', namely the vision of society in purely naturalistic terms, excluding all originary moral motives (CR 216/PR 336). In the third section, Hegel's philosophy of recognition of the Iena period is presented as an important response to this challenge. In his reading of Hegel, Ricœur underscores the important role of crime as the negative generator of the struggles for recognition. However, this negative is not the equivalent of the negative principle in Ricœur's normative-political schema. And the reactualization of that negative of Hegel's by Honneth in the form of his theory of misrecognition is not that either.<sup>34</sup> To find the right *locus* of comparison, one has to see how Ricœur situates himself with respect to Honneth – his most important interlocutor in study III of *Course of Recognition*:

I have borrowed more from him than just from the title of part 2 of his book. I want to think of this section [study III, iv – E.W.] as a dialogue with him, where my contribution will run [i] from some complementary [ii] to a few critical considerations, which will in turn open the way [iii] to an argument directed against the exclusive emphasis on the idea of a struggle, [iv] in favour of a search for more peaceful experiences of recognition. The



final section of this chapter [study III, v – E.W.] is devoted to this argument and this search. (CR 186/PR 293)

So much does Ricœur accept Honneth's project of founding a social theory with normative content (CR 186/PR 294) that he can reformulate the German philosopher's project in his own terms, as follows:

In my own vocabulary, it is a question of seeking in the development of conflictual interactions the source for a parallel enlarging of the individual capacities discussed in my second chapter under the heading of the capable human being out to conquer his ipseity. The course of self-recognition ends in mutual recognition. (CR 187/PR 294)

Because of Ricœur's declared proximity to Honneth, I shall not comment on the manner in which he takes over Honneth's threefold theory of recognition, nor consider the 'complementary considerations' that he offers under way, but go straight to the questioning of the emphasis on struggle in the philosophy of recognition. It is here that Ricœur's own voice is most audible.

When will people, who struggle for recognition, consider themselves really recognized? This is Ricœur's question (CR 217/PR 337). The importance of this question is to ponder if the struggle for recognition may not lapse into a 'bad infinity': 'Does not the claim for affective, juridical and social recognition, through its militant, conflictual style, end up as an indefinite demand?' (CR 218/PR 338). And this question is more than a mere theoretical curiosity: 'The temptation here is a new form of the "unhappy consciousness", as either an incurable sense of victimisation or the indefatigable postulation of unattainable ideals' (CR 218/PR 338–935). To reformulate schematically: is there not a possibility that through the insistence on struggle as the means for obtaining recognition a laudable normative-political pursuit may produce (partially) avoidable, seriously harmful effects?

The advantage of schematizing Ricœur's concern in this way is that it helps to avoid an erroneous construal of his ambition: never is there a question of proposing an alternative to the struggle for recognition,<sup>36</sup> said by Ricœur to be 'always incomplete/*jamais inachevé*' and 'endless/*sans fin*' (CR 259/PR 396). Rather, with one hand Ricœur holds on to the negative *and* positive moments of the 'interminable' struggle for recognition; with the other he draws closer the idea of 'states of peace' (cf. CR 218/PR 339; 'pairing/*couplage*' CR 246/PR 378<sup>37</sup>), as forms of recognition, or, more precisely, experiences of effectively being recognized.<sup>38</sup> In other words, the notion of states of peace is introduced not to counter that of recognition, but to question the dominance of *struggle* in the quest for recognition. For these non-struggle-like forms of recognition, Ricœur claims a modest status in that they remain 'symbolic, indirect, rare, even exceptional/ *symbolique, indirect, rare, voire exceptionnelle*' (CR 245/PR 378, cf. CR 219/PR 341), moments of 'suspension of the dispute' (CR 245/PR 378), of 'truce' (CR 218/PR 339). Yet, once their true nature has been established, these exceptional experiences – even due to their exceptional character – will be revealed in their full 'seriousness' (CR 219/PR 341), as 'their power to reach and affect the very heart of transactions stamped with the seal of struggle' [*la force d'irradiation et d'irrigation au coeur même des transactions marquées du sceau de la lutte*] (CR 219/PR 341). This is the case because



... experiences of peaceful recognition [*reconnaissance pacifiée*] cannot take the place of a resolution of the perplexities raised by the very concept of a struggle, still less of a resolution of the conflicts in question. The certitude that accompanies states of peace offers instead a confirmation that the moral motivation for struggles for recognition is not illusory. This is why they [experiences of peaceful recognition – E.W.] can only be truces ... (CR 218/PR 339; translation modified similarly CR 245–6/PR 378)

In other words, the carrot that Ricœur holds out for those who follow him on his course towards the states of peace, is not only one of a temporal suspension of the struggle, but also of a point of view from where the meaning of the struggle can become clearer – the states of peace are ‘a “clearing” in the forest of perplexities’ [*une ‘clairière’, dans la forêt de perplexités*] (CR 245/PR 378; see also CR 218/PR 339<sup>39</sup>).

What Ricœur proposes to find through a philosophical grasp on this ‘clearing’, is the bridge between two ‘*régimes de vie*/regimes of life’ (CR 224/PR 348<sup>40</sup>): (1) that of justice<sup>41</sup> and of the market (see especially CR 231/PR 359) which is based on equivalence and to which the struggles for recognition remain indebted – in short, a regime of *struggle*, and (2) that of love (*agapé*<sup>42</sup>) which, without ignoring the other, remains carefree with regard to comparison, calculation and equivalence (CR 221/PR 344), in short, a regime of *peace*. Although this loving action is foreign to a world of social exchange governed by conventions and disputes about equivalence, it is not merely non-sensical action: it has its own correctness, it is a form of ‘*action qui convient*’ (‘fitting action’ in the sense of suitable action) like the action of Prince Myshkin in Dostoevsky’s *The Idiot* – cf. CR 224–5/PR 349. The difference between these two logics seems to correspond with what Ricœur calls reciprocity and mutuality (e.g. CR 231/PR 357, CR 232–3/PR 360, CR 259/PR 396). The benefit of coordinating these two mutually exclusive ‘logics’ resides in *practice*: ‘both refer to one and the *same world of action*, in which they seek to manifest themselves as “*competencies*.” The privileged occasion for this confrontation is precisely that of the gift’ (CR 224/PR 348; emphases added<sup>43</sup>). In other words, one gains access to the clearing that is the states of peace by examining the gift.

As an ‘occasion’ of confrontation, the ‘gift’ stands for the event of giving, receiving and giving in return. I stress, as important as it may be to identify the two contrasting *logics* that feed into the gift, the gift is for Ricœur a category of *action*.<sup>44</sup> Ricœur’s treatment of this subject is of remarkable complexity; space allows me to highlight only what is essential to our current purposes. Borrowing (and adapting) from Marcel Hénaff,<sup>45</sup> Ricœur affirms that in examining the gift the accent is to be placed on the ‘between’ giver and receiver, rather than on the spirit of the gift (e.g. *hau*, as Mauss did) or on the third (transcendental logic of exchange, as Lévi-Strauss did). Hénaff teaches Ricœur to see the gift as event of mutual recognition, where the present is a ‘security’ [*gage*] and a symbol for this recognition. Ricœur in turn, while accepting the merits of the ideal typical dichotomy of merchandise and non-merchandise goods (and the actions by which each is transferred to another person), nevertheless insists that in practice this dichotomy is considerably softened. Especially the entanglement of gift-giving and commerce, and the possibility of the failure of gifts (as derived from the work of the historian N. Z. Davis, CR 238–41/PR 369–72) in practice, support Ricœur in this claim. However,

once the entanglement of categories in practice has been affirmed, Ricœur mobilizes what he considers to be the normative resources of the ideal-typical dichotomy (CR 241/PR 372)<sup>46</sup> in order to help to distinguish between 'good and bad reciprocity'. To do this, the accent has to be placed on the quality of the *middle* moment of the gift event – that of receiving – as *gratitude*: 'Gratitude lightens the weight of obligation to give in return and reorients this toward a generosity equal to the one that led to the first gift. This would be the answer to the question posed by Davis concerning the possibility of sorting out good reciprocity from bad' (CR 243/PR 374–5). Gratitude creates a divide in the threefold process, introducing an interval/gap<sup>47</sup> that is 'inexact' between gift received and gift given in return. In this way the demand of equivalence is broken and gift and counter-gift become 'incommensurable' (CR 243/PR 375). However, this interval with its 'inexactitude' and incommensurability still constitutes the link by which the counter-gift is a *response* to the generosity of the initial gift (CR 243/PR 374). In this way, Ricœur's 'ethics of gratitude' (CR 243/PR 375) enriches the interpretation of the 'between' of the gift as mutual recognition that he took over from Hénaff.

Having argued for the special place of receiving-in-gratitude as a significant moment in mutual recognition, Ricœur nonetheless does not wish to see this gratitude summarized by a morality of giving (i.e. to compensate for failures of institutional justice). Rather, in its ceremonial and ritual enactment, such mutual recognition could 'irradiate and irrigate'<sup>48</sup> the political on all scales, and it could enforce the optative – the wish for the good life – behind politics, by opening its clearing or horizon.<sup>49</sup> Hence Ricœur's conclusion that 'in the exchange of gifts social partners experience actual recognition' (CR 245/PR 378). However, even in gratitude there is no fusion between social partners, since in the experience of mutual recognition, one is confronted with the radical dissymmetry of the other – mutual recognition seems to be suspended, for Ricœur, somewhere between the exercise of equivalence and the disturbing confrontation with the radical alterity of the other. The act of gratitude is the act by which the dissymmetry between giver and receiver is saved from oblivion (CR 263/PR 401).

Let us conclude this exposition of Ricœur's take on the struggles for recognition and the states of peace. The complex discussion of the gift by Ricœur aims at affirming that the gift is not simply the same as the state of peace: giving, receiving and giving in return demonstrate the complex manner in which the logic of *agapé* or of states of peace may irrigate and irradiate a logic of reciprocity, of calculation. The gift is not the state of peace, it is already the integration or coordination of peace and struggle. But the peaceful moment of the gift – of which the thankful reception is the condition – is sufficient to give this exceptional suspension of hostilities the quality of a clearing. From this vantage point, one is referred back, with new insight, to the practice of struggles for recognition. I cite, again, what seems to me the essential passage:

Experiences of peaceful recognition cannot take the place of a resolution of the perplexities raised by the very concept of a struggle, still less of a resolution of the conflicts in question. The certitude that accompanies states of peace offers instead a confirmation that the moral motivation for struggles for recognition is not illusory.<sup>50</sup> This is why they [experiences of peaceful recognition – E.W.] can only be truces [*trêves*], clear days [*éclaircies*] that we might call 'clearings' [*clairières*], where the meaning of action emerges from the fog of

doubt bearing the mark [*estampille*] of *fitting action* [*action qui convient*]. (CR 218/PR 339; translation modified)

This expression, '*action qui convient*' (borrowed from Laurent Thévenot,<sup>51</sup> without being cited as such), seems to evoke the idea of practical wisdom gained, and henceforth to be practised, through the confrontation of two forms of practice or '*régimes de vie*', neither of which can be pursued exclusively without harm.

With these conclusions in mind, the moment has come to synthesize the key findings from this formal reading of Ricœur's third study in *Course of Recognition* with reference to the previously identified schema prevalent in Ricœur's work (section III, above). (1) The reflection on mutual recognition is concerned with the normative fibre of society and its political dynamics. (2) This dynamics (and especially the political dimension on which we focus here) is characterized by *struggles* for recognition. (3a) Struggling is the general name for the manner in which one can affirm one's political identity or interests. One acts politically well when one engages in such struggles, even if struggling may come at a price of harm to some. The fact that this form of struggling is the response to 'crimes' may justify it, but cannot prevent it entirely from harmful side effects. (3b) However, if one is to believe Ricœur, the political life of struggle contains an inherent potential of truces that are not merely nothing, like the holes in a cheese, but moments of mutual acknowledgment that the struggle is not in vain. Clearly such moments of gratitude [*reconnaissance*] cannot be elevated to the principle of politics – the refusal of calculation, equivalence and strategy is simply foreign to the life of politics. (4–6) But like a clearing in the forest, it refers the struggling parties back to their struggle, with new insight. This is not the insight of a theoretical harmonization of struggle and peace, but the wisdom that the normativity of politics is situated in this practical balancing act that could be summarized in the formula: yes, up to here do I struggle, but, at least for a short, exceptional moment of gratitude for recognition received, not further.

## V Conclusion: Struggles for recognition, ethics of gratitude and Ricœur's ethico-political thought

The synthesis which concluded the previous section allows us to respond to the question with which the current exploration was sent on its way: Is *Course of Recognition* Ricœur's last appropriation of Weber's notion of political responsibility? Certainly not in the strict sense. But it has been demonstrated to remain in essence true to the lesson that Ricœur drew from reading Weber's exposition on responsibility in 'Politics as a Vocation'. To conclude this article, I would now like to indicate briefly why this is not a trivial finding. Let us take this reading of the third section of *Course of Recognition* as the vantage point from where to look back on the unfolding of Ricœur's ethico-political thought.

On the one hand, it should be evident that while affirming the remarkable similarities between *Course of Recognition* and his 1959 essay on Weber, Ricœur is not simply wielding a philosophical pastry cutter. Numerous differences between the two texts (to say nothing of all of Ricœur's 'Weberian' writings in between) can be called to testify to this fact. One notices, for instance, the disappearance of the notion of responsibility and the

appearance of that of generosity; one cannot miss the down-tuning of the moment of negativity (which is just perceptible in the idea of truces), with respect to the earlier confident Socratic 'no'. If I thus claim that one could discover a certain identity of Ricœur's ethico-political thought – identifiable from the vantage point of the curious essay of 1959 – then we should think, in Ricœurian terms, of an identity-*ipse*, a narrative identity.

On the other hand, it could be demonstrated that *some* aspects of the recurrent pattern in Ricœur's ethico-political thought<sup>52</sup> stretch back even further into Ricœur's earlier writings, where I have found no explicit reference to Weber<sup>53</sup> and where it would be anachronistic to deploy the heuristic value of the 1959 essay. I shall only indicate the *prima facie* plausibility of this claim, by using as a beacon an article of 1949: 'Non-violent Man and his Presence to History'.<sup>54</sup> The author who, in *Course of Recognition*, appropriates Boltanski's question about *agapè* as state of peace, while pondering whether 'it is a construct allowing description of actions carried out by persons in reality, or a partially realizable ideal, a utopia, or a deception?' (CR 222/PR 345, citing Boltanski), there reflected on the question 'Under what conditions may the non-violent person be something other than a yogi, in the sense of which Koestler uses this term, or something other than a purist on the fringes of history . . . under what conditions may non-violence concern our history?'<sup>55</sup> The same author who argued that the experience of peaceful recognition informs political action and (may) lend it the mark of 'fitting action', insisted then that 'if non-violence is to have meaning, it must fulfill it *within* the history which it at first transcends. It must have a secondary efficacy [*efficacité*] which enters into account with the efficacy of the violence in the world, an efficacy which alters human relationships.'<sup>56</sup>

The agent of mutual recognition who has to realize in the heat of action what is ideal typically called an 'ethics of gratitude' (*Course of Recognition*), is recognizable in the prudent agent limiting the ethical aim and the moral imperative mutually (*Oneself as Another*), who in turn reminds one of the 'ethics of limited violence' of the political actors (advocated in 'The Political Paradox'<sup>57</sup>) and the anxious pacifist who, after the experience of the Second World War,

. . . hopes that over and above the impurity which [the non-violent person] shares with all the acts which light upon history, that this person's novel act [*acte insolite*], which is always questionable on the basis of its short-term effects, has a double sense: that it supports the purpose [*visée*] of values and the endeavor of history toward the *recognition* [*reconnaissance*] of people by each other.<sup>58</sup>

Likewise, an intellectual genealogy would trace the path from the last Ricœur's refusal to see in gratitude a mere morality of giving as panacea for institutional justice, but effective 'clarifying' and 'irradiating' practices of ceremonial and festive gestures, to the author of *Amour et Justice* who strongly advocates the ideas of generosity and compassion to be written into law,<sup>59</sup> to the author concerned with non-violence in 1949 who already highlighted the significance of non-violence as a gesture of refusal or non-compliance written into the longer flow of history.<sup>60</sup> Or again, one could follow the course back from the recognition book's insistence on finding 'fitting action' by which to mediate the theoretically irresolvable tension

between struggle and gratitude, through *Oneself as Another's* development on the practical solutions by which the prudent agent mediates in practice the eternal theoretical tension between ethics and morality, to the bold declaration in the essay on non-violence that '[f]or he who lives, who acts [unlike for the historian – E.W.], there is neither compromise nor synthesis but *choice*'.<sup>61</sup> To conclude, looking at these developments in chronological order, the pattern of thought derived from reading Weber and subsequently deployed and adapted, was already a variation on a theme pre-existing the essay of 1959.

Moreover, one cannot but conclude that, although Ricœur's voice remains fairly low in the chorus of voices, he lets us hear in his discussion of mutual recognition (in *Course of Recognition*), that at the same time he nevertheless resolutely pursues concerns that define his ethico-political thought. Not only is his contribution typically 'Ricœurian', the very way in which the agenda is set for this discussion is 'Ricœurian' too.

There is a third way in which one may want to consider the last part of *Course of Recognition* as typically 'Ricœurian', namely its relation to Ricœur's religious conviction. However, here one has to qualify that he is true to a specific 'Ricœur', namely the one who, in a famous paragraph of *Oneself as Another* claims to practise

... to the very last line, an autonomous, philosophical discourse... [to] assume the bracketing, conscious and resolute, of the convictions that bind me to biblical faith... that this asceticism of the argument, which marks, I believe, all my philosophical work, leads to a type of philosophy from which the actual mention of God is absent and in which the question of God, as a philosophical question, itself remains in a suspension that could be called agnostic.<sup>62</sup>

This, I get the impression from reading *Course of Recognition*, is the author's self-stylization; Ricœur is not any more theological in speaking about *agapé*, than Boltanski is. And yet, equally 'Ricœurian' is the co-existence of parallel theological or semi-theological reflections in his *oeuvre* where the philosopher's voice is not absent (Ricœur would say, one finds under the name 'Ricœur', writings of a philosopher *tout court* and of a Christian of philosophical expression, as one hears in Bach a composer *tout court* and a Christian of musical expression<sup>63</sup>). One cannot but reflect on the resonances (or dissonances?) between the explorations on *agapé* as non-equivalent acts of generosity in the 'agnostic' *Course of Recognition* and those in *Amour et justice* where Christian and Jewish valences of love set the tone. Here too the genealogy stretches far back, in the form of the question regarding the place of Christian practice (love) and the unavoidable need for secular institutions of justice. From *Course of Recognition*, then, through *Amour et justice*,<sup>64</sup> to 'Tasks of the Political Educator' (1965)<sup>65</sup> (where the entire Weberian pattern assigns to religious groups the specific role of the 'no') and right into 1949, with the question of historical relevance of the pacifism advocated in the Sermon on the Mount.

## Notes

1. '...ne souhaitant pas m'engager dans une discussion de philosophie politique portant sur la structure de l'Etat' (PR 296; the English translation CR 188 is incorrect). As here, I shall

- henceforth refer in the main text to this book by using the letters *CR* for the English translation of Paul Ricœur's *The Course of Recognition*, trans. D. Pellauer (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2005) and *PR* for the original, *Parcours de la reconnaissance* (Paris: Stock, 2004).
2. Cf. Paul Ricœur, *Lectures on Ideology and Utopia*, ed. Georg H. Taylor (New York and London: Columbia University Press, 1986), lessons 11 and 12 (the English edition is the original version) and 'Les Catégories fondamentales de la sociologie de Max Weber' [Fundamental Categories in Max Weber's Sociology], in *Le juste*, vol. 2 (Paris: Esprit, 2001), pp. 155–71.
  3. Paul Ricœur, *Temps et récit* [Time and Narrative], vol. 1 (Paris: Seuil, 1983), pp. 322–39.
  4. Max Weber, 'Politics as a Vocation', in *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology*, trans. H. H. Gerth and C. Wright Mills (London: Routledge, 1991), pp. 77–128. I shall also refer to the German edition of 'Politik als Beruf' [Politics as a Vocation] (1919), in *Gesammelte politische Schriften* [Collected Political Writings] (Postdamer Internet-Ausgabe), pp. 396–450, following the 'Marianne-Ausgabe' (1999), accessible at: <http://www.uni-potsdam.de/u/paed/pia/index.htm>
  5. See, for example, Paul Ricœur, *Du texte à l'action* [From Text to Action] (Paris: Seuil, 1986), p. 441 or *Soi-même comme un autre* [Oneself as Another] (Paris: Seuil, 1990), p. 227.
  6. See, for instance, Paul Ricœur, 'Postface au *Temps de la responsabilité*' [Afterword to 'The time for responsibility'] [1990], in *Lectures*, vol. 1, *Autour du politique* [On the Political] (Paris: Seuil, 1991), pp. 271–94.
  7. I have given an indication of the extent of this development in 'Interpreting Mutual Recognition and Politics – Paul Ricœur and Thomas Bedorf' (forthcoming).
  8. See Pierre-Olivier Monteil, 'Paul Ricœur. Variations et continuité d'un projet politique' [Variations and Continuity of a Political Project], *Études Ricœuriennes/Ricœur Studies* 4(1) (2013): 170–83 and the literature overview he provides. Considering the full thematic scope of Ricœur's work is Domenico Jervolino's 'L'unité de l'oeuvre de Ricœur à la lumière des ses derniers développements. Le paradigme de la traduction' [The Unity of Ricœur's Work in the Light of its Last Developments: The Paradigm of Translation], *Archives de Philosophie* 67(4) (2004): 659–68. Joël Schmidt explores an aspect of Ricœur's recurrent thought pattern in 'Generous to a Fault: A Deep, Recapitulative Pattern of Thought in Ricœur's Works', *Études Ricœuriennes/Ricœur Studies* 3(2) (2012): 38–51.
  9. This issue is far from settled. See, for instance, Jean Grondin's recent *Paul Ricœur* (Paris: PUF, 2013). The commentator insists on the religious motive in the formation of Ricœur's particular version of hermeneutics and the task Ricœur set for hermeneutics. One is struck by the great emphasis he places on the last pages of *Finitude et culpabilité* [Finitude and Guilt] (trans. as *Fallible Man*) (of which he gives a very illuminating reading), while hardly discussing the same issue in Ricœur's later work.

To get an impression of the scope of development of Ricœur's view on the relation between religious conviction and philosophical practice, one does well to compare, for instance, his contribution to the 'Christian philosophy' debate of the mid-1930s (see the valuable orientation provided by Michael Sohn in 'The Paris Debate: Ricœur's Public Intervention and Private Reflections on the Status and Meaning of Christian Philosophy in the 1930s', *Études Ricœuriennes/Ricœur Studies* 4(1) (2013): 159–69) with Ricœur's own self-reflective fragments published in *Vivant jusqu'à la mort* [Living up to Death] (Paris: Seuil, 2007), particularly pp. 99–113. See also the characterization of Ricœur's position in Jean Greisch, *Paul Ricœur*.

*L'itinérance du sens* [Paul Ricœur: The Roaming of meaning] (Grenoble: Millon, 2001), pp. 407–13, 430–4.

10. Ernst Wolff, *Political Responsibility for a Globalised World: After Levinas' Humanism* (Bielefeld: Transcript, 2011), ch. 9.
11. This holds for section II and the first part of section III. The current article nevertheless departs from the previous study in three important respects.

The monograph concentrated on 'the political paradox' and Ricœur's reworking thereof in the 1990s as a reinterpretation of Weber's understanding of political responsibility. Because of the peculiarities of *Course of Recognition* considered from this angle – as stated in the first paragraph of the introduction (above) – the monograph stopped short of *Course of Recognition*; in fact it did not consider *Course of Recognition* at all. By placing *Course of Recognition* in the centre now, I intend this article as an extension of the previous study.

This means that the time span of my argument is now longer; not from the 1950s to the 1990s, but Ricœur's entire writing life, except for the pre-war writings (although a part of this demonstration will be presented only in the form of a *prima facie* argument).

I now think that the case for the Weberian line in Ricœur had been somewhat overstated in my monograph *Political Responsibility*. By extending the family trait beyond what can be demonstrated directly to be related to Ricœur's use of Weber and by developing the idea of a narrative identity of Ricœur's political thought, I hope to make my previous argument more sophisticated.

12. Weber, 'Politics as a Vocation', p. 115; 'Politik als Beruf', p. 435.
13. *ibid.*
14. Likewise: 'it is not possible to bring an ethic of principle and an ethic of responsibility under one roof' [*Es ist nicht möglich, Gesinnungsethik und Verantwortungsethik unter einen Hut zu bringen*] (Weber, 'Politics as a Vocation', p. 122; 'Politik als Beruf', p. 443, transl. modified).
15. Weber, 'Politics as a Vocation', p. 120 (trans. modified, emphases added); 'Politik als Beruf', p. 441.
16. Weber, 'Politics as a Vocation', p. 121; 'Politik als Beruf', p. 442.
17. Weber, 'Politics as a Vocation', pp. 78, 121.
18. *ibid.*: 125.
19. *ibid.*: 125–6.
20. *ibid.*: 127 (trans. modified; 'mature', 'every one of us' and 'can' emphasized in the original text); 'Politik als Beruf', p. 449.
21. See Wolff, *Political Responsibility*, p. 201.
22. Weber, 'Politics as a Vocation', p. 122; 'Politik als Beruf', p. 443.
23. Max Weber, *Le savant et le politique* [a translation of 'Science as a Vocation' and 'Politics as a Vocation'], intro. Raymond Aron, trans. J. Freund (Paris: Plon, 1959).
24. Ricœur, *Lectures*, vol. 1, pp. 235–40.
25. See the more detailed description of the particularities of Ricœur's reading in Wolff, *Political Responsibility*, pp. 229–31.
26. Ricœur, *Lectures*, vol. 1, p. 240.
27. See Hans Lenk, *Konkrete Humanität. Vorlesungen über Verantwortung und Menschlichkeit* [Practical Humanity: Lectures on Responsibility and Humaneness] (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1998), p. 156.
28. Weber, 'Politics as a Vocation', p. 127.



29. Weber, *Le savant et le politique*, p. 199.
30. Curiously, much later and in a different context, Ricœur paraphrases the words '*ici je me tiens*' in a manner much closer to what I propose here, namely as a formula expressing chance, transformed by continuous decisions into destiny – incidentally this is the formula Ricœur uses to explain his relation to the Christian faith. See Ricœur, *Vivant jusqu'à la mort*, pp. 99 ff., particularly p. 102.
31. This is the major theme of my *Political Responsibility*, ch. 9.
32. Paul Ricœur, *Oneself as Another*, trans. K. Blamey (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1992), p. 352.
33. It is one of the oddities of *Course of Recognition* that, while section 2 clearly takes up the hermeneutics of the capable agent (of which the most complete formulation is in *Oneself as Another*), this is nonetheless not without amputating from it the socio-political dimension that was part of that field of Ricœur's work and that he considered earlier strong enough to serve (to a certain extent) as framework for the two volumes of *The Just*.  
An argument for the strength of Ricœur's earlier work to approach even a notion like recognition, which is not systematically thematized in *Oneself as Another*, forms the backbone of my article 'Interpreting Mutual Recognition and Politics – Paul Ricœur and Thomas Bedorf' (forthcoming).
34. However, it should suffice for current purposes to point out that if there is a parallel to Ricœur's tripartite ethics–morality–prudence (as in *Oneself as Another*) in Honneth's theory of recognition, then it is not that recognition equates ethics, misrecognition equates morality and prudence equates some form of negotiation between the two (despite apparent similarities). Rather, I would look for it in both authors' acknowledgement of construing normative thought as a theoretically irresolvable tension between Aristotelian and Kantian moments. Compare studies 7–9 of *Oneself as Another* to Axel Honneth, 'Between Aristotle and Kant: Recognition and Moral Obligation', in *Disrespect: The Normative Foundations of Critical Theory* (Cambridge and Malden, MA: Polity, 2007), pp. 129–43.
35. However, Arto Laitinen, 'Paul Ricœur's Surprising Take on Recognition', *Etudes Ricœur-iennes/Ricœur Studies* 2(1) (2011): 35–50 questioned the possibility of the struggle for recognition leading to such a bad infinity.
36. Although Ricœur misleadingly uses the term 'alternative' in *PR* 341.
37. In fact, Ricœur is quite clear about it that 'the test of credibility for any talk about *agapé* lies within the dialectic of love and justice, opened up by this act of drawing near to someone' (*CR* 223/*PR* 346).
38. Cf. 'more peaceful experiences of recognition' (*CR* 186/*PR* 293, as in the citation above, likewise *CR* 218/*PR* 339, cited below) and 'the recognition at work [*à l'œuvre*] in the ceremonial exchange of gifts' (*CR* 251/*PR* 384–5; emphasis added).

For this reason (and what follows) I would shy away from such facile diametrical oppositions as, for instance, claiming that if Foucault investigates the war implicit in peace ('la guerre au filigrane de la paix', *Dits et écrits* [Interviews and Writings], vol. III [Paris: Gallimard, 1994], p. 125), Ricœur investigates the peace implicit in struggle. Ricœur entirely subscribes to a discourse of struggle, but still offers a reminder of a rare anthropological possibility, the 'states of peace', whence (among others?) the meaning of the struggle gains intelligibility.

39. One can hardly avoid contemplating the significance of Ricœur's recourse to this Heideggerian imagery – '*clairière*' is a frequent French translation for Heidegger's notion of *Lichtung*

(see, for instance, the translation by François Vézin). In the light of the subsequent discussion, it will become clear that according to Ricœur, it is only in gratitude that the misrecognized or forgotten dissymmetry between self and other is brought back into dialectical play in mutual recognition. The conclusion that Ricœur apparently leaves to his readers to make (and to decide if a reference to Heidegger is at all needed here) is that the correct form of receiving – gratitude – which cannot be understood monologically, since it is already a response to a generous gift, is a clearing in the forest of interpersonal and societal conflict. At least in this sense, Ricœur seems to imply, then, that *Dasein* is not a clearing unto itself (cf. Martin Heidegger, *Sein und Zeit* [Being and Time] [Tübingen: Max Niemeyer, 1927[1993]], p. 133), but can benefit from this light only in interaction with others in a particular ethical manner.

This implication would have to be considered an extension of Ricœur's reflection on the voice of the conscience, in Heidegger and Levinas, in study X of *Oneself as Another*. I have commented at length on the significance of Ricœur's use of the notion of recognition in the context of this earlier book, in 'Interpreting Mutual Recognition and Politics – Paul Ricœur and Thomas Bedorf' (forthcoming).

40. 'Regimes', or (following the vocabulary of Boltanski and Thévenot) 'grammars', or again 'logics', but not 'realms', as the English translation reads.
41. 'The reference in justice to the idea of equivalence contains the seed of new conflicts ignited by the plurality of principles of justification relative to the conflictual structure of 'economies of standing' [*économies de la grandeur*]' (CR 220/PR 343). The cited phrase refers to the original title and current subtitle of what is now Luc Boltanski and Laurent Thévenot, *De la justification. Les économies de la grandeur* [On Justification: Economies of Worth] (Paris: Gallimard, 1991).
42. It should be noted straightaway that the New Testament notion of *agapé* is used by Ricœur, as in Boltanski with whom he is in dialogue on this point, to refer to forms of *competent action working with a logic of generosity, rather than with one of equivalence* (cf. Luc Boltanski), 'Agapé. Une introduction aux états de paix' [Agapé: An Introduction to States of Peace], in *L'amour et la justice comme compétences. Trois essais de sociologie de l'action* [Love and Justice as Competences: Three Essays on the Sociology of Action] (Paris: Métailié, 1990), pp. 163–298). One does find in Ricœur's work a meditation on justice and love, where abundant references to the Scriptures and religious philosophy set the notion, similarly defined by its logic of non-equivalence, in a form of discourse closer to that of theology – see our remarks about *Amour et justice* in section V. It is not clear if Boltanski or Ricœur knew about it when, in 1989, both were working on this notion of *agapé*.
43. Cf. CR 223/PR 347: 'The dialectic of love and justice takes place precisely through this disproportion, which continues up to the paradox of the gift returned.'
44. This is partially derived from Boltanski, where love and justice are explored as competences within the framework of a sociology of action; CR 220/PR 343. See also the subtitle of Luc Boltanski's book cited above: *L'amour et la justice comme compétences. Trois essais de sociologie de l'action*.
45. In the present context, I shall not go into the detail of Ricœur's dialogue with his most decisive interlocutor on the gift, Marcel Hénaff, in particular, his book *Le prix de la vérité: le don, l'argent, la philosophie* [The Price of Truth: Gift, Money and Philosophy] (Paris: Seuil, 2002). See also Ricœur's essay *La lutte pour la reconnaissance et l'économie du don* [The Struggle for Recognition and the Economy of Giving] (Paris: Unesco, 2004). See also

Hénaff's and Ricœur's contributions to M. Olivetti (ed.) *Le don et la dette* [The Gift and the Debt] (Padua: CEDAM, 2004).

Alain Loute's approach to the relation Ricœur–Hénaff and in particular to Ricœur's surprising redeployment of Hénaff's decidedly agonistic interpretation of pre-modern gift-giving for an argument on contemporary 'states of peace' gives some clarification: gift-giving in archaic societies reveals something of the universal human capacity for giving (A. Loute, 'The Gift and Mutual Recognition: Paul Ricœur as a Reader of Marcel Hénaff', in Greg Johnson and Dan Stiver (eds) *Paul Ricœur and the Task of Political Philosophy* [Plymouth: Lexington Books, 2013], pp. 105–25. My reservations about his coupling of ethics/morality, love/justice and struggle for recognition/gift need not be discussed here.)

46. Probably Ricœur has in mind that (1) the gift should be free and disinterested (*gratuit*) and that (2) the gift in return may not be a reimbursement.
47. It is curious that Ricœur, having engaged with Luc Boltanski's *L'amour et justice comme compétences*, devoted in his own discussions time with all of Boltanski's interlocutors: Mauss, Anspach, Lévi-Strauss, Lefort... except with Bourdieu (cf Boltanski, *L'amour et justice comme compétences*, pp. 253–9). When Ricœur then argues for the gap [*écart*] separating giving–receiving and receiving–giving in return and even comments on the fitting time for giving in return (CR 243/PR 375), one may wonder why no mention is even made of Bourdieu – whatever the dissimilarities between him and Ricœur may be; Bourdieu argued for the decisive role that the temporal interval plays in separating giving–receiving from receiving–giving in return in action. See Pierre Bourdieu, *Esquisse d'une théorie de la pratique* [Outline of a Theory of Practice] (Paris: Seuil, 1972), pp. 229 ff.
48. Cf 'an irradiating and irrigating wave'/une onde d'irradiation et d'irrigation (CR 245/PR 377).
49. See:

Such *gestures*, I said, cannot become an institution, yet by bringing to light the limits of the justice of equivalence, and opening space for hope at the horizon of politics and of law on the postnational and international level, they unleash an irradiating and irrigating wave that, secretly and indirectly, contributes to the advance of history toward states of peace. The *festive*, which can inhabit the rituals of love, in its erotic, amicable, or societal forms, belongs to the same spiritual family as do the requests for pardon just referred to. Moreover, the festive aspect of the gift as a *gesture*, is like the hymn on the verbal plane, or, more generally, all those uses of language I like to place under the grammatical patronage of the *optative*, which is neither a descriptive nor a normative mode of speech. (CR 245, emphases added/PR 377)

50. This return from the 'states of peace' to the struggles for recognition is a crucial moment in Ricœur's understanding of mutual recognition. Without it, his idea of 'recognition at work in the ceremonial exchange of gifts' (CR 251/PR 384–5) would be open to critique of its possible ideological functioning: of providing the motivational resource for self-inflicted sociopolitical submission in self-images, roles, or obligations. On this theme, see Axel Honneth, 'Anerkennung als Ideologie' [2004] [Recognition as Ideology], *Das ich im Wir. Studien zur Anerkennungstheorie* (Berlin: Suhrkamp, 2010), pp. 103–130.
51. Laurent Thévenot, 'L'action qui convient' [Fitting Action], in Patrick Pharo and Louis Quéré (eds) *Les formes de l'action* [Forms of Action], *Raisons Pratiques* 1 (Paris: École des hautes études en sciences sociales, 1990), pp. 39–69 and in a reworked format published after *Course of Recognition*: 'Les régimes d'une action qui convient: du familial au public' [Regimes of Fitting Action between the Familiar and the Public], in *L'action au pluriel. Sociologie des*

- régimes d'engagement* [Action in the Plural: Sociology of Regimes of Engagement] (Paris: La Découverte, 2006), pp. 93–111. Thévenot has subsequently reconstructed his own three-way dialogue with Ricœur and Honneth on the nature of recognition as 'Reconnaissances avec Paul Ricœur et Axel Honneth' [Recognition with Paul Ricœur and Axel Honneth], in Christian Delacroix, François Dosse and Patrick Garcia (eds) *Paul Ricœur et les sciences humaines* [Paul Ricœur and the Human Sciences] (Paris: Editions la Découverte, 2007), pp. 127–43.
52. Of which this article, together with ch. 9 of my *Political Responsibility*, affirms the continuity from the 1950s to the end of Ricœur's life.
  - See also Jean Greisch's illuminating proposition of three hypotheses on the relation between *Course of Recognition* and Ricœur's earlier work in 'Vers quelle reconnaissance?' [Towards Which Recognition?], *Revue de métaphysique et de morale* 50(2) (2006): 149–71.
  53. The Ricœur archive contains reading notes on 'Politics as a Vocation', dated 1956, and the first significant use of Weber by Ricœur dates from his article on 'The Political Paradox' (I thank Mme Catherine Goldenstein for access to it). That Ricœur would have been confronted much earlier with the significance of Weber's distinction between an ethics of responsibility and an ethics of principle for political action seems likely if one considers the importance of Landsberg for the personalist group around the journal *Esprit*. See Paul-Louis Landsberg, 'Le sens de l'action' [The Meaning of Action], *Esprit* 7–8 (1938) : 81–103 (83).
  54. In Paul Ricœur, *History and Truth*, trans. C. Kelbley (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1965), pp. 223–33/'L'homme non-violent et sa présence à l'histoire' [Non-violent People and their Presence in History], in *Histoire et vérité* [History and Truth], 3rd edn (Paris: Seuil, 1967), pp. 265–77.
  55. Ricœur, *History and Truth*, pp. 223–4/*Histoire et vérité*, pp. 265–6 (trans. modified).
  56. *ibid.*: 228/ 271 (original emphasis restored).
  57. Paul Ricœur, 'The Political Paradox', in *History and Truth*, pp. 247–70/'Le paradoxe politique', in *Histoire et vérité*, pp. 294–321.
  58. Ricœur, *History and Truth*, p. 229/*Histoire et vérité*, p. 272; trans. modified; emphasis added.
  59. Paul Ricœur, 'Amour et justice' [Love and Justice (1990)], in *Amour et justice* (Paris: Editions Points, 2008), pp. 13–42 (p. 42). A useful discussion of this text is Fred Dallmayr, 'Love and Justice: A Memorial Tribute to Paul Ricœur', in Farhang Erfani (ed.) *Paul Ricœur: Honoring and Continuing the Work* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2011), pp. 5–20.
  60. Ricœur, *History and Truth*, p. 232/*Histoire et vérité*, p. 275. And one may note that Ricœur's 1949 understanding of the nature and significance of non-violent 'gestures' is quite close to that of *Course of Recognition*; see CR 245/PR 377, cited in note 48 (above).
  61. Ricœur, *History and Truth*, p. 233/*Histoire et vérité*, p. 276.
  62. Ricœur, *Oneself as Another*, p. 24.
  63. Ricœur, *Vivant jusqu'à la mort*, p. 107.
  64. It is telling, that *Course of Recognition* and *Amour et justice* not merely contain parallel texts, but that Ricœur did not refrain from using part of the material of the earlier essay in *Course of Recognition* – see CR 222 ff./PR 346 ff.
  65. In Paul Ricœur, *Political and Social Essays*, ed. David Steward and Joseph Bien (Athens: Ohio University Press, 1974), pp. 271–93/Ricœur, *Lectures*, vol. 1, pp 241–57, Ricœur declares:

I want to say at once that I adopt as a working hypothesis, and I add as a personal guideline, a most fruitful distinction which I borrow from the great German sociologist of the beginning of this century, Max Weber . . . I am convinced, in fact that the health of a collectivity rests ultimately on the

justness of the relation between these two ethics. On the one hand the ethic of principle is supported by cultural and intellectual groups and by confessing communities, including the churches, which find here – and not at all in politics proper – their true point of insertion. On the other hand, the ethic of responsibility is also the morality of force, of methodological violence, of calculated culpability. (Ricœur, *Political and Social Essays*, pp. 287–8/*Lectures*, vol. 1, p. 253; trans. modified)

What social health needs, then, is to maintain these two ethics in

... a lively tension ... For if we reduce the ethic of principle to the ethic of responsibility, we will sink to political realism and Machiavellism, which results from the constant confusion of means and ends. But on the other hand if the ethic of principle pretends to a kind of direct action, we will sink to all the illusions of moralism and clericalism. The ethic of principle can only operate indirectly by the constant pressure which it exerts on the ethic of responsibility and power. (Ricœur, *Political and Social Essays*, pp. 287–8/*Lectures*, vol. 1, pp. 253–4)

This is illustrated by a practical example in the essay ‘Prévision économique et choix éthique’ [Economic Forecast and Ethical Choice], in Ricœur, *Histoire et vérité*, pp. 339–56 (pp. 353–4) (not in the 1965 English translation).